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The Megiddo Message

Devoted to the Cause of Christ

The At-one-ment

TOMORROW MAY BE TOO LATE!

BEYOND THE SHADOWS

REST A MOMENT BY THE STILL WATERS

MUSINGS OF THE EDITOR

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

MY GOD AND I

Vol. 42, No. 23

November 5, 1955



The Megiddo Message

November 5, 1955 Volume 42, No. 23

Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone, THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

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- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
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PUBLISHED by the Megiddo Mission Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester 19, N. Y.

● SUBSCRIPTION RATES: One year, \$1.00; six months, 50 cents; single copies, five cents. Make checks or Money Orders for all literature payable to the Megiddo Mission Church.

● Please notify promptly of any change of address.

Entered as second-class matter, October 15, 1920, at the Post Office at Rochester, N. Y., under Act of March 3, 1879.

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The Atonement or the AT-ONE-MENT

ATONEMENT in theology means the redemptive work of Christ, through which sinful man is made at one with, or reconciled to, God. It assumes two theories, the fall of man from God's grace through Adam's sin, and the release of man from his fallen condition by the vicarious or substitutional suffering of Christ on Calvary. Whereas Adam through sin estranged humanity from God, Christ through righteousness reconciled man with his Creator. In other words, by His passion and death Christ secured the destruction of sin and the restoration of justification lost in Adam.

Such is the doctrine of the atonement, subscribed to and cherished by all Christendom. And a pleasing doctrine it is, releasing mankind from his own moral obligations, and transferring the duties of individual righteousness to Christ. But regardless of the comfort which it may convey to the soul, regardless of the freedom from responsibility which it may offer, regardless of its popular appeal; before it is accepted as truth, this doctrine should be thoroughly analyzed to see if it is in harmony with reason, and if it conforms to Scriptural facts.

The doctrine of the atonement has been regarded for so long as the very center of the Christian faith that our aim to reconsider its significance may come as a shock to "fundamentalists." However, men and women in this twentieth century are becoming much more broad-minded than their fathers, much more open to evidence, much more ready to reason.

To such we appeal.

We have said that the doctrine of the atonement presupposes two theories: first, the fall of man through Adam's sin; second, the restoration of man through Christ's righteousness. These two theories must be examined for accuracy before we can either accept or reject the major doctrine which they support.

Do We Become Sinners Through Adam's Sin?

The Word of God speaks clearly and with authority.

We have the testimony of Moses (Deut. 24:16): "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sins." It would not appear that we are burdened with inherited guilt from our early ancestor.

Also we have Isaiah 59:2: "Your iniquities [not Adam's] have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you."

Which is Scriptural?

This is the first of a series of articles which will set in true Scriptural light the work of Christ and refute the universally accepted theory that He died on the cross for the sins of humanity.

And we have Jeremiah 31:30: "Every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge."

Paul's words in Gal. 6:7 are to the point: "Whosoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," not a harvest of Adam's deeds, but of his own.

The 18th chapter of Ezekiel describes three successive generations (father, son, and grandson), their works, and their rewards which in each instance are determined by individual merit. First, we read of a man who is just, who does that which is lawful and right. Despite the evils which surround—the idolatry, the immorality, the avarice, and the dishonesty—he keeps himself pure. He "hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God."

This righteous man begets a son who becomes involved in the evils from which his father refrained, with the result "he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die." His father's righteousness has no power to free him from guilt.

Now the third generation comes to view, "a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like." Does his father's iniquity leave upon the son's character a stigma which cannot be removed? No! He "hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live."

But there were objectors to this doctrine of non-transferable responsibility. "Doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father?" they queried. Then the Almighty restated His position, so that it could not be disputed. "When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son" (Ezek. 18:5-20).

This is the Bible principle, stated and restated through the Book, placing the burden of transgression where it belongs, upon the transgressor and not upon his unborn posterity. With this evidence the theory of the fall of man through Adam's "original sin" appears in its true light—absolutely false and unscriptural.

Do We Become Righteous Through Christ's Righteousness?

With the removal of the fall of man from the foundation of the atonement, it is left resting upon a single the-

ory: the sacrificial death of Christ for the sins of the world. Obviously, His sacrificial death becomes *unnecessary* to free us from "original sin" which does not exist. Only the burden of our own sins remains, and the question, Is it possible for Christ's death on Calvary to free us from personal guilt and justify us in the sight of God?

Let us first approach this question from the standpoint of justice. Can we conceive that the Almighty, a Being of infinite justice, would damn a good man on his own merits, and save a bad man on the merits of another? This is exactly what belief in the atonement entails: the sacrifice of a righteous man, and the redemption of humanity through His righteousness.

Again, let us approach the question from the standpoint of reason. The Almighty is a God of reason and commands us to exercise our reason (Isa. 1: 18). Is it reasonable that the death of another, be he ever so pure, should affect or benefit us? Can a law be satisfied by the execution of the wrong person? When a man commits a crime, the law demands his punishment, not that of a substitute; and there can be no law, human or divine, that can be satisfied by the punishment of a substitute.

The popular concept of Christ's redemptive work on Calvary is an affront to justice and reason alike.

Now, turning our attention to the Scriptures, what assurance do we find there that the work of a substitute will insure our salvation?

Moses, the great lawgiver, said, "It shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us" (Deut. 6: 25). This puts the responsibility squarely upon the individual; and individual responsibility and substitution cannot exist together.

The Psalmist said, "Therefore hath the Lord compensated me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight" (18: 24). There is no trace of substitution here.

Isaiah demands individual righteousness: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well" (1: 16, 17).

God, through the Prophet Ezekiel, is very direct in His demand for individual righteousness, and equally emphatic in His denunciation of a substitute. "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, . . . As I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered" (14: 14, 16).

Jesus' own teaching stressed character: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5: 48). At the close of the Sermon on the Mount Jesus again speaks pointedly: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7: 21). By saying, "Lord, Lord," and not doing what He commanded, they were attempting to rely upon substitution, an action which Jesus strongly condemned.

The Apostle Paul repeatedly stressed practical living as the key to eternal life. He says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to

that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5: 10). At the Final Judgment we shall stand or fall by our own conduct. "Every man shall bear his own burden" (Gal. 6: 5), no hope of transferring it to Christ. Perhaps Paul's strongest statement opposing the theory of substitution is Phil. 2: 12, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

In I John 3: 3 the Apostle speaks plainly: "Every man that hath this hope in him *purifieth himself*, even as he [Christ] is pure." A personal matter! Jesus concludes the category in Rev. 22: 14, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." The final blessing is to be pronounced upon the *doer*, not upon the man who depends upon substitution.

We are neither condemned because another man sinned, nor justified because another was righteous. Substitution forms no part of the divine plan of salvation. Thus we find that the popular conception of the atonement conflicts with the plainest of Bible principles, that of individual responsibility. It also runs counter to other Bible teachings, as we shall later show.

The Atonement in Retrospect

Since the Bible forbids a substitute and demands individual righteousness, one may justly wonder how the so-called redemptive work of Christ has gained such prominence in Christian theology. The answer is available, because the background and origin of the atonement and its ultimate infiltration into Christian belief is discussed extensively by historians and other writers.

To trace the origin of the atonement we are compelled to lay the Bible aside and examine the rites and ceremonies of primitive pagans. In fact, the atonement is the most obvious relic of heathendom to be found in theology today.

From the early dawn of history, heathen nations sacrificed to their gods, the value of the sacrifice varying according to the extremity of the danger to be averted or the atrocity of the sin to be expiated. If they sought simply continued favor, their gifts took the form of cheaper material commodities; but when a plague or an invading enemy nation created widespread peril and threatened the safety of a whole community, then the value of the sacrifice was proportionately increased. Human beings of a low rank were offered. If the wrath of an offending deity was still not appeased, the sacrifice was enlarged to include the children of princes and nobles.

Thus at the time of Christ, the idea of human sacrifice and of a god atoning for the sins of mankind were matters of ordinary thought and conversation. Rome ruled the world.

After the lapse of a few centuries, Pagan Rome became absorbed by the Papal power. This is how the transition took place: The Apostate Church was eager for converts. On all sides she saw the pagan altars which reeked with the blood of human victims tortured and slain for the remission of sins. And so the Church, seeing her opportunity to capitalize on the crucifixion and death of Christ, developed the theory that in place of many offerings and sacrifices to appease the wrath of many gods,

the supreme Deity was appeased by the literal death and blood of Christ. Here was the Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the world; here was the greatest of all those traditional sacrifices of royal sons by their royal fathers.

Such interpretation was popular with the pagans. In fact, it was because they found in Christianity so satisfying a counterpart to their former beliefs that they were so readily converted by the Church.

Thus it was that the dark and savage doctrine of the atonement became the central dogma of apostate Christianity; but it is a matter of astonishment that it is still preached and tolerated in this twentieth century.

The doctrine of the atonement is inconsistent with Scriptural statements concerning human sacrifice. Repeatedly this practice is stoutly condemned and forbidden. Can it be conceived that the Almighty would denounce human sacrifice and then accept the sacrifice of His beloved Son for the sins of the world?

A few texts are sufficient to reveal His disapproval of human sacrifice.

Israel was tempted to copy the nations, and so Moses warned: "You must never learn to follow the abominable practices of the natives. There must be none among you who burns his son or his daughter alive. . . . Anyone given to these practices is abominable to the Eternal" (Deut. 18: 10, 12, Moffatt).

Again His displeasure in human sacrifice is voiced by the Prophet Micah. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Mic. 6: 6—8; see also I Sam. 15: 22; Prov. 21: 3; Isa. 1: 11—19; Hos. 6: 6).

God condemned human sacrifice. Will He reverse and accept it in the form of Christ? He demanded individual righteousness. Will He retract and accept Christ's in our stead?

The Bible At-one-ment

The word *atonement* has a strange but significant history. At first it was the equivalent of reconciliation; now it has come to mean propitiation. The Church ignobly changed its meaning to support their doctrine.

An article on the subject which appears in "The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia" is very enlightening. The writer says in part: "It is obvious that the English word, atonement, does not correspond etymologically with any Hebrew or Greek word which it translates. . . . It is a rare instance of an Anglo-Saxon theological term; and like all purely English terms employed in theology, takes its meaning, not from its origin, but from the theological content of the thinking of the men who employed such English terms as seemed most nearly to convey to the hearers and readers their ideas. No effort was made to convey the original Hebrew and Greek meanings by means of English words. . . . Even when first employed for expressing Hebrew and Christian thought, these terms, like all other religious terms, already had a content

that had grown up with their use, and it is by no means easy to tell how far heathen conceptions might be imported into our theology by a rigidly etymological study of terms employed. . . . There is greater danger of making the study of the Atonement a study in dogmatic theology. The frequent employment of the expression 'the Atonement' shows this tendency. The work of Christ in reconciling the world to God has occupied so central a place in Christian dogmatics that the very term atonement has come to have a theological rather than a practical atmosphere, and it is by no means easy for the student, or even for the seeker after the saving relation with God, to pass beyond the accumulated interpretation of 'the Atonement' and learn of atonement."

Since men of repute acknowledge that "the Atonement" does not take its meaning from its origin, but rather from the thinking of the men who employed the term; and since we have proved that "the Atonement" as known in theology finds no Scriptural support, we feel wholly justified in discarding all popular conceptions of the word—in passing beyond the accumulated interpretation of "the Atonement"—to learn of the Bible at-one-ment.

The study of the Bible at-one-ment involves us in no theological absurdities or mysteries; it is plain, direct, simple. In a word, it is the process of becoming at one with God, to be carried out by the individual with the aid of Christ's life and example.

The Hebrew word *kaphar* is defined "to cover, to cover over, hence a covering . . . to cover sins, i. e. to pardon . . . to pardon sin."

What is the covering for sin? "Charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (I Pet. 4: 8). Let no one mistake Bible charity for philanthropic deeds. "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (I Cor. 13: 4—7). Anyone who through life's varied and trying scenes manifests all these lovely virtues is possessed of Bible charity which is the covering for sin—the means of at-one-ment with God.

Another definition is "to pardon sin." How do we secure pardon? "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55: 7). Whatever our past wickedness may have been, abundant pardon is available upon this one condition—that we forsake our wicked ways and thoughts. This is the Bible at-one-ment.

Other definitions of the word are "to obtain forgiveness . . . to be freed from charge (of a guilty person), to receive pardon." The Greek word *katallage* signifies, "a change from enmity to friendship, reconciliation. . . reconciliation of sinners with God . . . reconciliation through change . . . a thorough change."

How do we become friends with God? Jesus answers, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15: 14). Herein lies our only right of claim upon God's friendship—the doing of His commandments. This expresses in simplest terms the means of Bible at-one-ment.

(Continued on page 7)

Tomorrow May Be Too Late!

Day after day the burning sun
Pursued its way across the sky
In majesty, the only one
That upper realm to occupy.
And as the sun, with mien unbowed,
Passed overhead, ne'er leaving mark,
Nor darkened by a single cloud,
Brave Noah worked upon the ark.

For God had said, "an ark must be
Prepared against the day of wrath;
That men may to this refuge flee
When angry waters cross their path.
For wickedness has so increased
That men now seek each other's blood;
And soon My wrath shall be released
Upon them in a mighty flood.

"Thou, therefore, Noah, build the ark,
And build it as a workman should;
And these dimensions surely mark,
Selecting but the choicest wood:
Three hundred cubits shall it be
In length, and fifty cubits wide;
With windows, more than two or three,
For those who will within abide."

The keel was laid and undismayed
By scoffings of the motley throng
That watched to see the progress made,
Brave Noah pushed the work along.
And often, as he paused to rest
From arduous duties of the day,
He preached of Truth and righteousness,
And warned that men should God obey.

Weeks changed to months, and months to
years,
Still Noah labored faithfully,
Undaunted by increasing jeers,
That God's salvation he might see.
But the ungodly gave no heed
To warnings sounded loud and clear;
They showed by every word and deed
They of the future had no fear.

"Why, Noah," they were wont to say,
As frequently they came to view
The work that had been done that day,
"Why don't you take up something new?
You'll never need this queer affair
You've labored on so many years.
Just see the time you'd have to spare
If you would put away your fears.

"Look up, and see the azure sky,
Unclouded still, as it has been
For months, and tell the reason why
You're different from other men.
'Tis folly to expect a flood
When rain is something scarcely known;
In working on this thing of wood,
Forsooth, your senses must have flown."

But to their railings he replied,
"I did not say the flood would come
Till all who will are safe inside;
And I am positive that some,
Although it be but few, will heed
God's warning cry, and speed the day,
By every thought, and word, and deed,
When they can enter in and stay.

"Oh, fools," he cried, "and slow of heart
To believe Jehovah's word!
Oh, that I could some faith impart,
That each one might be truly stirred.
Think you that I would spend my time
To build an ark, did I not know
That in Jehovah's plan, sublime,
A flood would soon this land o'erflow?"

At last came the auspicious day
When Noah cried, "Behold the ark!
Who will with me God's law obey,
And from the shores of sin embark?
Oh, come; the time draws on apace!"
He warned, "and sad will be your fate
If you refuse this day of grace.
Tomorrow it will be t-o-o l-a-t-e."

But his appeal was met with jeers
By all except his closest kin.
"Ho, ho!" men cried, "we have no fears.
The day's too nice to enter in.
Besides, we've other things to do—
Yes, I must prove the piece of ground—
And I must see a person who
Tomorrow may not be around."

But hark! a rumbling sound is heard,
A cloud appears, like as a bird
On wing, scarce noticed by the throng
Of pleasure lovers. Not for long,
However, do they laugh and mock—
The sky grows dark; shock after shock
Of thunder rolls across the plain,
Midst stabs of lightning—then the rain.

No ordinary storm is this,
To strike one place, another miss;
The world of the ungodly feels
The wrath Jehovah on it deals.
No ordinary storm, indeed;
It rains as if to fill the need
Of bygone years, no gentle shower;
Its fury grows each passing hour.

At first the earth absorbs the rain;
Then pools in size and number gain,
And stretch their grasping fingers forth,
Intent on covering the earth.
The people's fear to panic turns,
As one, and then another learns
That they are trapped! there's no escape!
Oh, sad indeed is such a fate.

But what of Noah—where is he
When the ungodly strive to flee
The rising tide? is he alarmed?
In the confusion is he harmed?
Ah, no; the calmest of them all,
He gathers those who heed his call,
And in the ark they rest secure,
For it was made long to endure.

How different the scene without—
The mob in frenzied anguish shout,
"Oh, Noah, open; let us in!
How black indeed has been our sin."
But now their pleadings are in vain,
In fact, scarce heard above the rain
That as a torrent tumbles down,
Their wailing cries to quickly drown.

And as they sink beneath the flood
The ark is loosened from the mud
In which it rests—it is afloat!
Within is heard the joyful note
Of praise, as Noah and his band
Give thanks for God's delivering hand.
Safe, safe are they from waters dark;
Yes; safe within the blessed ark.

Of Noah's deeds we love to tell,
Of how he served his Maker well,
Believing all Jehovah said,
And anxious by Him to be led.
But what of us? do we believe
The warnings we each day receive?
Do we, by every thought and deed
The day of God's salvation speed?

We, too, know an ungodly age
When, all about, the wicked rage
And evil far outweighs the good,
As God has warned us that it would.
Rank immorality and pride
Go hand in hand; while side by side,
Crime and injustice sit enthroned;
While Christ as King has been disowned.

Around the corner danger lurks
For him who but halfhearted works—
Temptation, Flattery, and Sin
Are found the harlot's house within.
They would divert you from your goal,
While Sin in secret gains control;
And, lacking help from comrades true,
The prize is quickly lost to view.

Beware of those who mock our God,
And say, "What power hath His Rod?
All things continue as of old,
With nothing new now to behold."
Our Master had these words to say,
That, "As it was in Noah's day,
So shall it be at My return."
And for that day the faithful yearn.

We see the words of Paul fulfilled,
As disobedient and self-willed
Children shrug off restraining hands,
And disregard our Lord's commands.
Unthankful, scorning natural ties,
True words of wisdom they despise;
While evil men wax worse and worse,
And bring upon themselves a curse.

"Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord
Shall fall in fury," says the Word,
"Upon the wicked head, nor will
His anger cease till He fulfill
The thoughts and intents of His heart—
Till men from sin and wrong depart.
This in the latter days shall be—
A sign that all the world shall see.

We have an Ark—this mighty Truth—
Where all who leave the sins of youth
May rest when this impending storm
Shall banish sin in every form.
"Come, enter, while there yet is time!"
Sounds forth the warning, grand, sublime,
"Ere you receive that dreadful fate,
And hear those doleful words, T-o-o l-a-t-e!"

—L. L. S.

Beyond the Shadows

IN A COUNTRY noted for its mountainous terrain, lies a peculiar valley. This long, deep valley is known to the inhabitants of the surrounding region as the Valley of Shadows.

This valley is never without shadows, due to the fact that it receives no direct sunlight, and the trees and rocks in the valley throw long, dark shadows. On the east, south, and west it is overarched by towering, rocky crags. The only sunlight it receives is the borrowed light it obtains from the thickly mica-studded northern crag, which, facing the east, south, and west, brings to the valley's depth reflections of the morning's glorious awakening, the noonday's blinding glare, and the softening splendor of the day's declining hours.

Sightseers camp in the valley overnight that they might ascend to the eastern height in time to behold the sun's rising, which, it is affirmed, defies description by mortal tongue. The tedious and laborious work necessary is considered insignificant in the face of the rewarding sight.

.....

This present life could well be compared to the Valley of Shadows; for mortality hems us in on every side. Where breathes the person whose vale of mortality contains no shadows; who has never stood where the dark, depressing, and often grotesque shadows of care, adversity, disappointment, sickness, pain or death, lingered?

Although the travelers of this age walk by faith, receiving no Holy Spirit power, no visible angelic visitation, we have the light reflected, as it were, from the Prophets, Jesus, and the Apostles; therefore by borrowing from the brightness of the coming shadowless Day, the shadows of our lives can be considerably lightened and brightened.

Take, for example, that particularly comforting beam reflected by Isaiah and John to those whose lives are shadowed by physical suffering: "The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing. . . . Neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

Or perhaps it may be the shadow of care, sorrow, or fear, that has become our portion; then the light reflected by David, Isaiah, and Paul will help eliminate it. "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you. . . . The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. . . . For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. . . . Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. . . . The redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."

Zephaniah, too, sends a welcome ray into the gloom to those whose soul, like Lot's, is grieved with the wickedness on every side. "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent. . . . He hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even the Lord, is

in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more." Isaiah adds: "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise." Micah sounds a glad note: "And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it."

Perhaps a shadow appears in your life if people laugh at or think you absurd because you are observing the command, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate . . . and touch not the unclean thing." Remember the old but true adage, "He that laughs last laughs best." Instead of our being a laughingstock in the future, we have the promise: "Them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet."

Even the dread shadow of death will lose much of its grim aspect in the light of: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. . . . I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. . . . Death shall be swallowed up in victory."

And if we would be participants in Tomorrow's Sunrise ceremonies, Today must be accomplished the gigantic feat of removing from our individual lives in its entirety the biggest and blackest of all shadows, Sin. We cannot possibly climb to the pinnacle of perfection if we persist in climbing in the dark, cool shadows of evil thoughts, impatience, wrath, envy or jealousy; nor is there any time for the fulfilling of any fleshly desire; for we are in danger of getting lost and being too late.

Paul gives an excellent formula for a swift and successful climb: "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood . . . but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus . . . laying aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us . . . casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ . . . and run with patience the race that is set before us."

No true sunshine-lover will want to live in the valley; his desire and aim will be higher, higher, and still higher until he receives all the rays possible of God's love. But the shadows have had a definite purpose in our life. Without the toil and the shadow we shall not have, or could not appreciate fully, the rest and the sunlight.

Insignificant indeed will seem the shadows encountered along the way, of small importance the toil of the long, strenuous climb, as we stand enveloped in the healing beams of that glorious Sunrise and are invited to dwell with our Saviour—Beyond the Shadows.

Rest a Moment by the Still Waters

HOW often we hear these words, "Rest a moment," and often we need to. As we grow older how necessary for us to rest more, rest in the morning, rest in the afternoon. Doctors prescribe rest for many physical ailments, and rest is one of nature's best means of repair.

The Great Physician of all times also realized that rest is needed. He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This rest will be of a different kind than sitting down and resting our weary bodies. This rest will be the sweetest and best. It will be a rest from all the ills and aches of humanity, and rest from every form of evil; a rest from the works of the flesh.

Autumn has come and the pressure of summer's labor is relaxed. It is not exactly a time for leisure, but the pace changes and there is now opportunity for longer thoughts, deeper comprehensions, unhurried meditations. How good that each year should bring such a time, to rest the body; yes, but even more important, to relax the mind and give it time and room to fertilize the inner man by worship and meditation.

So let us pause and rest a moment, traveler; you seem in a great hurry, and indeed there is great need for haste in the right direction. But you are rushing hither and yon and in reality getting nowhere. We live in a mad, rushing world, where too many people are in too great a hurry to go nowhere to do nothing, and we find that spirit is catching. So why not take advantage of this season when all nature slows its pace, and rest with me a moment by this well of truth, and search our souls? And as we draw from Truth's refreshing depths we may rise up with a fixed purpose in mind, thus making greater speed toward our goal.

The world is full of confusion because men persist in jumbling facts and fancies. But let us who profess to know God, pause a moment and rethink our scale of values, putting the things pertaining to our eternal well-being uppermost.

Do we pause a moment in the morning as we rise from our couch and thank God for the gifts of life? Or are our first waking thoughts on the forthcoming duties of the day with all its perplexing problems and fears? O traveler, we miss so much of the natural and spiritual beauties of life because we do not pause a moment and consider the many wonderful blessings by which we are surrounded.

Our Lord offers us rest and freedom from all our cares. He pleads with us to take our problems to Him in prayer, to pause a moment and leave them at His feet, and so lighten our soul, knowing He cares for His own and will cause all things—not part—to work for our good. Our strength is given only for the day. If we try to carry yesterday's, today's, and tomorrow's load, we shall but break ourselves down under the weight.

Discontent is everywhere in the land which is blessed above all others. "If I were this, or that, or the other, I would be content," is the universal cry. The sailor envies the soft jobs of the landsman; the landsman goes to sea for pleasure; so on and on it goes, always wanting what

is not. A contented mind sees something good in everything, in every wind sees a sign of fair weather.

The Divine Word says, "But godliness with contentment is great gain." Ah! there is great gain in it; then it is something to be sought after. The cure for discontent is found by earnestly striving to discover the simple pleasures and happiness in our present condition. And that should not be hard, for "Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to usward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." By laying aside discontent, our mind will be at peace and we can rest in peace. "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them."

If discontented, look sharp; for envy may be near at hand. Envy is an evil too deeply seated to be spoken of lightly; its effects are too far-reaching, not only in our own lives, but it spreads and contaminates others. The one who harbors it suffers most. Scorpions can be made to sting themselves to death when confined within a circle of fire; even such is envy. When we cling to envy it is not possible for us to adopt a more suicidal course, so far as our own happiness and eternal life is concerned. Let us cast aside this burden of envy; thereby we may be released from another of life's burdens.

One evil leads to another, for envy and selfishness go arm in arm. You are not selfish? There is not a man or woman living but who at some time or other has been selfish. Selfishness is the bane of life. At times "Me first" seems to be our motto, while we should be thinking of others more and more, removing that selfish spirit.

Life is too short and too full of sorrow to say or do anything that would add to another's burdens. Let us try to be lifters, not leaners; be one who binds up the wounds, not the one who inflicts them.

If we would pause a moment when tempted to let angry passion rule us, we would recall that "he that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." As we continue to draw from this well of truth we see that this water is made up of only one ingredient, that is, obedience. And to be obedient we must be thinking creatures, not thoughtless.

As rest helps to combat disease in the human body, so rest from the works of the flesh will help the new man to grow. The natural or carnal mind is enmity to the law of God; therefore as long as the carnal mind rules and governs us, the new man cannot be at peace with God. Good and evil cannot be in the same place at the same time, hence the enmity. As soon as we rest from the works of the flesh, the new man can be at rest and peace, knowing the promises are sure to the pure of heart.

And now, traveler, as we continue our journey, let us remember to rest a moment along life's journey and discard every fleshly desire; and then when the Lord comes to make up His jewels, He will claim us as His own and usher us into a rest that will be lasting and enduring. He will then place us as a flawless gem in His crown of rejoicing, to remain forever.

Musings of the Editor

Your Best for the Master

JESUS is not here personally. He does not require any aid which we are able to offer. But He did say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Hence, our service and our giving must be for His cause, for His Truth, for the things which He loved and did.

Our best can be nothing less than an entire consecration of our remaining days to the cause of truth. How glorious, then, that one should devote his life to God in the early years of life! In one's declining years it becomes extremely difficult to change from the old habits and not only live a transformed life but also go far out of one's way to work, to sacrifice, to suffer in order to help others.

Youth is the most precious time of one's life. That is the time to make good resolutions, to set a proper course, to cherish the noblest ideals and the highest goals, and to begin the pursuit after the things which will merit the favor of God. Youthful lives, devoted to the service of God, are a delight to the Master. They who willingly renounce the pleasures or achievements of this world for His sake, in order to further His cause, in this way choose the better part. They give their best to the Master.

Privileged indeed are the ones who are reared under the influence of Truth. Theirs is a rare opportunity to begin early in life to give their best to the Master. But even if we are called to His service in later years, we need not be discouraged. Give your best. Look for opportunities to serve Him, and, more, create opportunities. The harvest is great but the laborers are few. Surely there is much everyone can do.

For the reward of life eternal which the Master will grant every faithful one, whatever we can do is little indeed; but nothing except the best will be acceptable.

THE AT-ONE-MENT

(Continued from page 3)

Another definition is "reconciliation through change." This change which will take place in the life of every man and woman who seeks to become at one with God is accurately described by Paul in Eph. 4: 22-24, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation [manner of life] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." This change from the former mode of life is by no means incomplete or partial. So thorough will the change be, so transformed the life, that the person affected will be considered "a new creature"—"old things . . . passed away; . . . all things . . . become new" (II Cor. 5: 17).

Making this thorough change is the work of a lifetime. It involves the reconstruction of all our thoughts, attitudes, impulses and actions, until in the most trying situation anger is changed to patience, abusiveness to loving-kindness, intolerance to compassion, fretfulness to trust, ingratitude to thankfulness. So impelling will be the de-

sire to be at one with God that our most pronounced fleshly weakness will actually be converted into our mightiest spiritual strength. So thorough will the change be that the pleasures and associations which were formerly a source of delight to us will become abhorrent in the realization of nobler interests and the quest for loftier goals. As we become at one with God in mind, disposition and will, we shall share the privileges and blessings of His friendship both now and through eternity.

The Bible at-one-ment is very rigid in its demands upon the individual—requiring the highest moral integrity to which humans can attain—but it is also very rewarding in the benefits which it bestows—granting to all worthy aspirants life, perfect, abundant, radiant, happy life in the Kingdom of God on earth forever.

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We have shown in this article that the doctrine of the atonement is of pagan origin and runs counter to the mass of Bible teaching which requires individual righteousness, and must therefore be rejected as unfit for Christians to believe. No effort has been made at citing or discussing numerous Bible passages which upon surface reading would seem to imply some benefits of Christ's righteousness as our substitute, some efficacy in His death and crucifixion to propitiate the sins of the world.

The Word of God is not "yea and nay"—it is not arrayed against itself—but is "yea and Amen"; the whole is in perfect agreement, absolute harmony. In succeeding articles of this series we shall show the absolute harmony of Scriptural references pertaining to the atonement.

CONTENTMENT

Perhaps because it is one of the sweetest things in life, contentment seems to be amazingly scarce. We seldom find a truly contented person; yet contentment can be cultivated, as it comes not entirely from material things, nor from circumstances.

Someone said, "the contented man is never poor, the discontented man is never rich." The rolling stone is merely restless, not ambitious. Contentment does not mean lack of thrift; it pays in dollars and cents just as surely as does ambition.

The contented person makes the most of what he owns, conserves, cares for, magnifies its value, and uses possessions as stepping stones to greater opportunities. The restless farmer will not even get the most out of what he has. Two men in succession owned the same poor farm; the first man capitalized on every good feature; the second was discontented, and every act, during his ownership, depreciated the value of the place.

Contentment comes from confidence, and justified confidence is from a mind and heart that realizes a greater Power which will help us shape our lives. It gives a calmness that creates poise in personality, that energizes power to succeed. The frustrated person gets nowhere.

Contentment makes the best of bad conditions until one can do something constructive about them.

Discontent and ambition are not a matched team. Discontent is a bucking broncho. On the other hand, ambition is a thoroughbred which teams up perfectly with contentment to plow a neat furrow.

—Selected.

Meditations

on the Word

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (Second Timothy 2: 19).

It appears there were people living in Paul's day who, much as some living in our own time, enjoyed advancing various theories of their own which had no foundation in fact, nor in the Word of God. While a practice of this sort, even in temporal affairs, may adversely affect those deceived by it, the danger is infinitely greater if one speculates on what God has spoken, or on matters pertaining to the hope of eternal life. Hymenæus and Philetus had done this very thing, concerning the truth had erred, saying that the resurrection was past already, and thus had overthrown the faith of some (verses 16, 17).

Paul now takes this opportunity to reassure them that despite the seditious teachings of these heretics, the foundation of God stands sure, that the Lord knows them that are His, and that His unequivocal demands of a holy and spotless life remain unchanged.

To us, the sturdiest pillar in the foundation of God is His written Word, the Bible. It is the only link connecting us with the Divine mind, and we are definitely assured that it shall abide forever (I Pet. 1: 23). Though men have tried to destroy it, the higher critics have sought to discount its authority, its enemies have tried to discredit it on the grounds of its being old-fashioned and out of date; yet its message still rings true, it is still centuries ahead of the most advanced works of scientific men, and the only Book giving a solution for the world's ills.

Yes, this foundation of God stands sure and steadfast. Without it we should know nothing of God's plan and purpose for His people on the earth, or of the rewards awaiting those whose life-work meets with His approval in the Day of Final Account, nor yet of the standard to be attained by all who would meet that approval.

In speaking of the foundation upon which the spiritual superstructure, or Church of Christ, is to built, the Apostle Paul has this to say: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together growtheth unto a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2: 19—21). We can rest assured that this foundation stands firm, that the authority of the Word is as sound and unshaken today as when given through those holy Apostles and Prophets centuries in the past, and that the work of taking out the spiritual stones for the holy temple is still in progress.

The "law of the Lord" still is "perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlighten-

ing the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether" (Ps. 19: 7—9).

An important factor of the foundation has to do with the promises of God. Without the steady influence of these "great and precious promises," by which we may some day be made partakers of the divine nature and escape the corruption of mortality (II Pet. 1: 4), we should be out upon the ocean of life like a ship without rudder or sail, drifting at the mercy of the elements. But hope, founded upon the Word of God, is like an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast (Heb. 6: 19). What greater hope could a human being have than the hope of eternal life! and that is the hope held out to the Christian. "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life" (I John 2: 25). With our limited powers of comprehension we cannot grasp the magnitude of this promise. Our present span of life, if used as the basis of our comparison with eternity, would be so out of proportion it would leave our minds in a state of bewilderment. It would be about like comparing one drop of water with all the waters in the ocean. Small wonder then that the Great Apostle exclaimed, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

We are given the seal that "the Lord knoweth them that are his." As important as this knowledge is to us to strengthen us in our fight against all the evils of our nature, it is immeasurably more important for us to make sure that *we are His*. By Him actions are weighed; He recognizes men only on the merits of their own character. He has no pets, no favorites. He never minimizes evil, nor condones sin in anyone. He does not look to the individual who has gained a high position in worldly affairs, to the man of superior intellect, or to the wealthy or influential among men; but, says He, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isa. 66: 2). From the foregoing it is evident that having God know us as His is conditional, and it remains for us to meet those conditions.

The last phrase in the verse is fraught with meaning, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." If we claim to be supported by Truth, or to have the name of the spiritual Christ named upon us, if living true to our claim we must depart from iniquity. In plain words, we must cease breaking God's law; for sin, or iniquity, is the transgression of the law. We cannot be hearers of the law and not doers, cannot say "Lord, Lord," without doing what He has commanded, and ever hear Him say, "Well done"; for "not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom. 2: 13).

Sin places a veil between us and God through which He will neither see nor hear us. Hence if we would have Him for our Friend when we "walk through the valley of the shadow of death," and live in His presence through an endless eternity, we must now "depart from iniquity." Like Paul, we must suffer the loss of all things of the flesh, must willingly accept every discipline God's Truth brings into our lives, must gladly submit to the forming-power of the Word, which as a fire and a hammer can break our stubborn will, and re-shape us into a vessel to be used in the service of the Master.

Your Questions Answered

BIBLICAL

PERSONAL

CURRENT

Do you have a question? Personal replies will be sent to Biblical questions to any correspondent, and counsel will be offered on problems pertaining to the spiritual life. THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE will publish only the most helpful discussions for the benefit of other readers. No names shall be mentioned.

Harmonize "after a long time the lord of those servants cometh" (Matt. 25: 19) with "Behold, I come quickly" (Rev. 22: 12).

It has been a "long time" indeed since "the lord of those servants" went into the far country, but it is comparatively "quickly" that He shall return after the midnight cry of the parable earlier in the chapter (Matt. 25: 1-6).

The long night of the Apostasy ended only when one arose and unearthed the long entombed Truth, its glorious beams penetrating the gross darkness that covers the earth. Only a short time would elapse from that time until Christ should appear upon the scene in glory. Hence, there is no contradiction between those two promises.

I feel that we should not judge our neighbors and relatives who attend other churches; for the Bible says, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

This rule is qualified two verses later (Matt. 7: 3). We cannot judge or condemn another in a transgression the like of which we ourselves are guilty. Thus we cannot pick a "speck of sawdust" from our brother's eye while we have "a plank" in our own! Our first duty is to remove the "plank," make ourselves right; then we can judge others by fruits, as informed in Matt. 7: 16-20.

Those who attend churches where false doctrines are taught defy the plain command to "cease . . . to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge" (Prov. 19: 27). See also Prov. 14: 7; Matt. 15: 14.

Is there any definite indication that Elijah will come within the next 50 years?

Yes. There are various signs by which we can know the coming of the Lord, preceded by His herald, Elijah the Prophet, to be imminent. No one knows exactly when (Mark 13: 32; I Thess. 5: 2), but we are advised of the times and seasons: The capital and labor situation (James 5: 1-9), the war preparation *versus* the peace planning (I Thess. 5: 3), the signs in the political heavens which Jesus foretold (Luke 21: 25), accompanied by distress of nations, the fear in men's hearts, the powers of these same political heavens shaken—"Then shall they see the Son of man coming"; as it was in the days of Noah, Lot, and Sodom whose sin was immorality (Matt. 24: 37; Luke 17: 26-30)—surely civilization reeks with moral corruption today.

In Mal. 4: 5 God promises to send Elijah "lest I . . . smite the earth with a curse." At the present rate of decline, could civilization last another 50 years? Only divine intervention can stop the avalanche—lest the earth be fit only to be smitten with a curse.

What is "the great tribulation," which the "Jehovah's Witnesses" define as the Battle of Armageddon?

This epoch, mentioned in Matt. 24: 21, refers to the dark and troublous centuries of the Apostasy when the Roman power, prophesied in Dan. 7: 24, 25 and 8: 12,



had worn out the saints and cast the truth to the ground. There never was, nor ever will be again, such a time when God's Holy Word will be trampled under foot and His saints slain. That this time is indicated is easily understood when we study the foregoing subject in Matthew 24. There Jesus is prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Jewish Age. Then things were to go from bad to worse, climaxing in the Dark Ages of the Apostasy ("the great tribulation"), when true religion should perish from the face of the earth.

The great Battle of Armageddon is yet future, when Christ shall ride forth in righteousness to judge and make war (Rev. 19: 11-19).

Are hurricanes, storms, airplane crashes, etc., signs of the Lord's coming?

No. Jesus made a plain statement. Read Matt. 24: 3-8. He declared "the end is not yet." Famines, pestilences, and earthquakes are but "the beginning of sorrows." They do not indicate the end of the age. Disasters have gone on through the ages, as the destruction of Pompeii in the first century, and numerous other volcanic eruptions. Hurricanes, cyclones, plagues, famine and similar calamities have affected whole nations at times in past centuries.

The signs of the Lord's coming are indicated in the political regions and moral spheres, where corruption, decadence and degradation present an alarming increase. These are signs of the nearness of Christ's Second Advent. Read Luke 17: 26-30; II Tim. 3: 1-5.

Kindly explain Matt. 11: 14 and 17: 11-13, regarding Elijah. It seems not too clear and some here say that Elijah has come.

Elijah the Prophet has not come. His mission is to herald Christ's second advent, as clearly stated in Mal. 4: 5. (The present-day "Elijah Class" can in no sense answer to the specification of the God-appointed herald—Elijah the *Prophet*.)

During His ministry Jesus sometimes referred to John the Baptist as Elijah or "Elias." He did not imply a singular personality—that the two men were one man—but rather that John's character and mission bore similarity to Elijah's. After describing John's work in Matthew 11, He concluded with, "This is Elias which was for to come." Always read Luke 1: 17 in this connection. John announced Christ's first advent "in the spirit and power of Elias," or with the same zeal and courage to denounce sin that Elijah will manifest when He announces Christ's second advent.

To avoid confusion of the two personalities, read John's own testimony in John 1: 19-23. He flatly denied that he was Elijah the Prophet.

In Matt. 17: 11 Jesus informed the disciples that Elijah should be the forerunner of His second coming, saying, "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things." He had no reference to John, for at the time of speaking John's mission had already been accomplished and he himself beheaded by Herod. The second advent and the second advent forerunner are the subject of verse 11.

But in verse 12 the subject is the first advent and the first advent forerunner, and the disciples understood that He spoke of John.

MY GOD AND I

My God and I begin the day together;
And strengthened by such fellowship divine,
I'll set my will and heart in earnest effort
To make the passing hours with goodness shine.

My God and I will tread the path together;
He leads me by His hand, and by and by
If I but follow on in meek submission,
He'll show me where the streams of Eden lie.

My God and I—how much can be accomplished,
Yoked in with such Divine Assistance! I
Must never fear to climb the path before me,
Though it should scale a mountain steep and high!

My God and I will plow my field together,
With Him to guide I'll make my furrow straight;
And with assurance of abundant harvest,
With buoyant heart my row I'll cultivate.

My God and I face all my foes together,
He gives me strength to fight without retreat;
If I but claim His armor's full protection
My God and I will every foe defeat.

My God and I—I'll give Him first place always,
Above, before, beside me He'll abide;
His law my stay, His word my meat and manna,
His Voice a Comforter when ills betide.

My God and I—we tread the way together,
He talks of higher realms where I may dwell,
Of planes of holiness and true endeavor
Where truth and light the mists of sin dispel.

My God and I—oh, what a precious friendship!
Dwarfing all earthly loves to nothingness;
If I but fling aside all fleshly burdens
I'll share with angels His eternal bliss.

—Contributed.

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